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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001302

SIPDIS

NSC FOR MGA VIN, LETIM
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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SU](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: NCP WILLING TO COMPROMISE ON OUTSTANDING CPA
ISSUES, GHAZI TELLS SE GRATION

REF: A) KHARTOUM 1284 B) KHARTOUM 1288

Classified By: CDA Robert E. Whitehead, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a November 17 meeting with Special Envoy Gration, Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Salaheddin recounted the continued inability of the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to reach agreement on several key outstanding issues related to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and laid blame to the SPLM for its perceived incapacity to make joint decisions. On the subject of elections, Ghazi noted that personally he has no objection extending the voter registration period to allow for greater inclusivity, but this would likely necessitate a slippage of the elections timeline. On Darfur, Ghazi remained lukewarm to the upcoming USG-sponsored rebel unification conference in Jebel Marra, noting that such large events have historically led to more fragmentation of the rebel movements rather than unity or a way forward. Ghazi also urged a more comprehensive approach to the peace process so not to marginalize Darfur's restive Arab tribes. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Ghazi stated that the NCP and SPLM had failed to reach agreement on several key outstanding issues related to the CPA, despite intensive discussions between the two sides led by GNU Vice President Taha and GOSS Vice President Dr. Riek Machar. The NCP continues to pursue a "package deal", according to Ghazi. On the Referendum, the NCP was willing to lower the turnout requirement below 67 percent, but only if the SPLM granted concessions on other issues, he said. The NCP is also willing to increase the number of seats in parliament -- either from the proportional vote or by appointment -- but demands that the SPLM recognize the census results in return, he said.

¶3. (C) Agreement has been reached on the issue of a national mechanism to address Popular Consultations, but if the results are disputed by both parties it is unclear in what venue that dispute would be adjudicated, he said, noting that the NCP prefers the Council of States, while the SPLM prefers an international arbiter. Abyei also continues to be a stumbling block, according to Ghazi, noting the SPLM's unbending resolve to retain Abyei for the Ngok Dinka and the South. In response, SE Gration urged, in addition to respecting the Hague Decision, that both parties seek to de-link the questions of rights, residency and access in Abyei.

¶4. (C) On the subject of elections, Ghazi noted that the first week of voter registration resulted in around two-million registered voters out of an estimated total of eight to ten million accessible voter age population, according to the UN. Despite increased campaigning to register voters by the SPLM in recent days, Ghazi was unsure

whether the eight to ten million target could be reached in the given time frame. Queried about a possible extension, Ghazi noted that this has not been requested or suggested by the National Electoral Commission (NEC), which has the authority to propose one. The NCP has not come to a decision on the matter, said Ghazi, though he noted personally he does not object to an extension. Asked by SE Gration whether an extended voter registration period would be possible without delaying the elections slated in April, Ghazi thought this prospect unlikely.

¶15. (C) Ghazi expressed frustration with the SPLM as a negotiating partner. "My impression is that they are obviously having a great deal of difficulty making decisions, as usual," he said, lamenting the fact that any given individual seems to have veto power over any consensus. "I'm beginning to wonder whether they could ever make a joint decision," he remarked.

¶16. (C) On Darfur, Ghazi reacted with wariness regarding upcoming US-sponsored rebel unification conference in Jebel Marra. He urged SE Gration that the GOS needs to understand the expected outcomes, noting that the "circus-like atmosphere" of such large gatherings tends to galvanize the rebels and ultimately prove counter-productive. He stated that the GOS would allow the upcoming conference to go ahead, but the its merits should be judged not by the immediate results, but also by the after-effects. "It remains to be seen whether it will lead to unity, or simply result in more fragmentation... I tend to believe it will be the latter," he said.

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¶17. (C) Ghazi was also lukewarm to the USG proposal for a GOS declaration of unilateral cease-fire, noting that security in Darfur is becoming an increasingly localized issue. Such a declaration could work in a local context he said, and urged that security arrangements be discussed in detail at the technical level with the S/USSES Peace and Security Team. Ghazi also urged that the mediation and international community pay more attention to Darfur's restive Arab tribes, pointing to the rise in banditry and kidnappings. "They are sending the message, 'you can't ignore us'," said Ghazi.

¶18. (C) Comment: The NCP appears to remain somewhat flexible on outstanding issues related to the CPA. However, the package deal as sought by the NCP does not appear imminent due to the difficult Abyei Referendum issue. On Darfur, it appears there is now varying levels of buy-in across the spectrum of the GOS political, military and security apparatus for the proposed rebel unification conference in Darfur, albeit with considerable reservations about the outcome, and with some parties more enthusiastic than others.

S/USSES had cleared this message.
WHITEHEAD